

Democratic mayor of Newark arrested by federal agents at protest amidst escalating deportation campaign

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On Friday, armed and masked federal agents wearing military fatigues arrested Democratic Mayor Ras J. Baraka of Newark, New Jersey while he and several other politicians were outside a massive immigration detention facility known as Delaney Hall. Newark is the largest city in New Jersey and home to a large immigrant population estimated at over 100,000.

Outraged protesters screamed at the masked agents as they took the mayor behind the barbed wire fence. "God damn Gestapo, that is what you are. New Jersey's Gestapo right here. Put on brown shirts, you will look more the part." Another man yelled, "F***ing Nazis."

According to the *New York Times*, Baraka was taken to a federal Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) facility in Newark, where he was held for over five hours before being released shortly before 8 p.m. local time.

This is the second time in less than a month that a prominent public official has been arrested for allegedly interfering with immigration police operations. Last month, the FBI—under the direction of Kash Patel—arrested Milwaukee County Circuit Court Judge Hannah Dugan. She faces two federal charges, including obstruction of a federal agency (a felony) and concealing a person to help them avoid arrest (a misdemeanor).

Baraka was protesting at the facility alongside Democratic Representatives Bonnie Watson Coleman, Robert Menendez Jr. (son of convicted U.S. Senator Robert Menendez), and LaMonica McIver. The three representatives were allowed to enter the facility as part of an oversight visit, but Baraka was denied access to the building after initially being allowed past the front gate.

According to Viri Martinez, an activist with the New Jersey Alliance for Immigrant Justice, after the federal agents denied Baraka entry to the facility, the mayor waited outside while the representatives went into the facility. After the representatives came out, the mayor and the representatives began walking back to the public side of the

gates. As they were walking back, an argument broke out and the agents "started intimidating and putting their hands on the congresswomen," she told *The Trentonian*.

Martinez continued: "There was yelling and pushing. Then the officers swarmed Baraka. They threw one of the organizers to the ground. They put Baraka in handcuffs and put him in an unmarked car."

Trump's current acting US Attorney for the District of New Jersey, Alina Habba, wrote on X following the arrest that Baraka "committed trespass and ignored multiple warnings from Homeland Security Investigations to remove himself from the ICE detention center in Newark, New Jersey this afternoon. He has willingly chosen to disregard the law. That will not stand in this state. He has been taken into custody. NO ONE IS ABOVE THE LAW."

On Fox News, Tricia McLaughlin, Department of Homeland Security spokesperson, falsely claimed the Democrats "stormed that gate and got to the first security checkpoint." She added, "They illegally broke into this facility."

Daily protests have been held outside the facility all week. In February, the federal government announced it had signed a 15-year, \$1 billion contract with the notorious GEO Group to reopen Delaney Hall and resume detention operations after its closure in 2021. Baraka, who is running for governor of New Jersey this year, has asserted that the facility lacks the necessary permits to resume operation, having not been inspected since it was shut down.

Ignoring Baraka's objections, the federal government announced on Monday that it had begun transferring immigrants to the facility as part of Trump's mass deportation operation. The 1,000-bed detention center is located near an international airport.

In a statement issued Monday, Christopher Ferreira, director of corporate relations at the GEO Group, claimed the attempt by the "Mayor's Office to stop the operation of a lawful federal immigration processing center at the

Delaney Hall facility in Newark is another unfortunate example of a politicized campaign by sanctuary city and open borders politicians in New Jersey.”

The arrest of Baraka comes after Trump signed an executive order last month aimed at imposing martial law on cities and states that resist his dictatorial rampage. The order, titled “Protecting American Communities from Criminal Aliens,” declared that “Federal supremacy with respect to immigration, national security and foreign policy is axiomatic.”

After falsely declaring an “invasion” at the southern border, the order stated “some State and local officials nevertheless continue to use their authority to violate, obstruct, and defy the enforcement of Federal immigration laws. This is a *lawless insurrection* against the supremacy of Federal law and the Federal Government’s obligation to defend the territorial sovereignty of the United States” (emphasis added).

In analyzing the order, the WSWS noted that while consequences could include Trump halting federal funds to state and local programs, “More ominous is the threat of prosecution against state and local government officials. ... Trump’s latest order clearly envisions extending such repressive measures to mayors, local chiefs of police, county sheriffs, and even governors or state attorneys general.”

In New Jersey, as across the country, there has been mass opposition to the deportation operations. Last month, in large cities and rural towns alike, millions participated in protests throughout the US. Workers, students, and community members spoke out against Trump’s plans for dictatorship and in defense of immigrants like Kilmar Abrego Garcia, one of nearly 300 men exiled to El Salvador in March.

At restaurants throughout Washington D.C. this week, community groups, workers and patrons confronted ICE agents as they attempted to kidnap workers while serving I-9 notices.

In Worcester, Massachusetts, on Thursday, over 30 people gathered to try to prevent ICE from kidnapping a mother and her 16-year-old daughter. Despite support from dozens of community members who tried to block the arrests, the family was kidnapped and disappeared by immigration agents.

The kidnapping was facilitated by the Worcester Police Department, which was called to the scene to protect the agents and ensure they could carry out their operation. The police arrested two people, including the 16-year-old girl taken by ICE and school committee candidate Ashley Spring, who is facing trumped-up charges of disorderly conduct and assault and battery.

The masked agents refused to provide warrants to

members of the community witnessing the kidnapping.

“We were all asking for a warrant. They didn’t answer at first, and then eventually just said this is a warrantless arrest when they were shoving them into the vehicle,” David Webb told CBS.

Commenting on the kidnapping on Boston Public Radio Friday, Democratic Governor Maura Healey defended the police and urged against a “rush to judgment.”

“There was a big crowd there and eventually Worcester PD was called to it to help address what was going on, and some in the crowd moved on law enforcement,” Healey said. “You cannot move on police.”

Healey’s remarks underscore that the defense of democratic rights cannot be left to the Democratic Party, which, by refusing to prosecute him for the January 6 coup, is responsible for Trump’s return to the White House. Following his inauguration, Democrats in the House and Senate provided Trump the votes to pass the anti-immigrant Laken Riley Act.

In the Senate, Vermont Senator Bernie Sanders, and every other Democrat, voted to approve Marco Rubio as Secretary of State. Under Rubio’s direction, Mahmoud Khalil and other students have been kidnapped by ICE for peacefully protesting the genocide in Gaza. In March, Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer and other Democrats provided Trump the necessary votes to prevent a government shutdown and ensure Trump and billionaire Elon Musk could continue their wrecking/enrichment operation.

The defense of democratic rights cannot be left up to either capitalist party. The Socialist Equality Party urges workers, students and all who oppose fascism, to join our party and help build the mass movement in the working class to put an end to the capitalist system, the source of inequality and dictatorship.



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